



News Release

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While Brown Cloud Remains on the Horizon for the Valley Local Leaders Remain Committed to Continued Efforts

PHOENIX- Representatives from Maricopa County Environmental Services, State of Arizona, local governments, and the business community joined forces today at Rustler's Rooste at the Pointe at South Mountain to announce plans to help stay violation free this winter season.

The Valley has not had a violation for carbon monoxide since January 1996. It is critical that the region maintain its clean streak so that the Valley can be approved as a non-attainment area. Reducing particulate pollution has been more difficult. Maricopa County will continue to issue High Pollution Advisories (HPAs) for carbon monoxide and particulate matter this winter season. The HPAs give citizens an opportunity to help keep levels from reaching the unhealthy range.

Peoria Mayor John Keegan, representing the Maricopa Association of Governments, applauded the region's efforts to combat air pollution. "I think it is a remarkable achievement that we have managed to improve air quality even in times of explosive growth," said Mayor Keegan. "However, as we continue to grow, maintaining or improving air quality will continue to be a challenge."

"Maricopa County has been working hard with industries, cities, towns, and the state to comply with the EPA's clean air standards," said Director of Maricopa County Environmental Services Al Brown. "We have done well, but we can do even more. We need to continue working together as a community to improve our air and quality of life in the Valley. This is one issue that everyone can get behind."

The primary source of the Valley's winter pollution is motor vehicles. Valley drivers can help reduce pollution in the air by reducing their driving and keeping their cars in good running condition. Valley commuters who carpool/vanpool, bus, bike, walk, or telecommute, even one day a week, make a significant contribution to reducing carbon monoxide and particulate pollution. It is also important to refrain from using wood burning fireplaces and stabilize bare earth to avoid soil disturbances.

"As a local leader in the Valley construction industry, Kitchell understands we can have a significant impact on the contracting community," said Safety and Risk Manager for Kitchell Construction Jeff Lange. "We can educate the people working on these sites by reaching out and communicating the importance of some simple methods that will help to improve the quality of our air."

Rustler's Rooste at the Pointe at South Mountain, which hosted the press conference, showed its support for the campaign by offering a "Clean Air" dessert or drink special during rideshare week, which is Oct. 29-Nov. 2, for people who carpool to their restaurant.

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To kick-off the winter pollution season, the Clean Air Campaign is utilizing a variety of strategies to help increase the community's awareness of ways to help reduce particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Messages encouraging Valley residents to carpool, ride the bus, telecommute, refrain from using wood burning fireplaces, bike, and walk will be heard on the radio, and seen on billboards and television, and in movie theaters.

Valley residents can call (602) 506-6400 to find out if an HPA has been issued. Valley residents can also sign up to be notified electronically by logging onto www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov. In the event of an advisory, residents should reduce their driving and use alternative forms of transportation.

To learn about alternative forms of transportation, rideshare, and vanpool programs, residents can call Valley Metro at (602) 262-RIDE (7433).

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